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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

Letter dated 22 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information regarding the implementation of international human rights instruments in the Republic of Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 70 (a) "Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments".

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 22 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the implementation by the Republic of Uzbekistan of international human rights standards

Uzbekistan has ratified all the main United Nations human rights treaties without reservations and regularly submits periodic reports on their implementation to United Nations treaty bodies.

The Parliament of Uzbekistan has ratified a total of more than 60 international human rights treaties. The Republic pays special attention not only to their ratification, but to monitoring the implementation of international human rights treaties.

Implementation of the main United Nations human rights treaties in Uzbekistan is aimed at:

1. Bringing domestic legislation in line with the main United Nations instruments

The Constitution of Uzbekistan fully incorporated the main provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights. Since independence, the Parliament of Uzbekistan has adopted 15 codes and over 400 laws in compliance with the main provisions of international human rights instruments.

International human rights treaties take precedence in Uzbekistan's legal system. The law stipulates that, in the event of a discrepancy between the international treaty norms and domestic legislation, the international norms take precedence.

2. Regular periodic reporting by Uzbekistan to United Nations treaty bodies

Uzbekistan regularly submits periodic reports to United Nations treaty bodies on the implementation of its obligations under United Nations human rights mechanisms. To date, the Republic has submitted 18 periodic reports to United Nations treaty bodies.

3. Following up on recommendations of United Nations treaty bodies

Uzbekistan pays special attention to the elaboration and implementation of national plans of action to implement the recommendations of treaty bodies. Alongside State bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the mass media participate extensively in such work. Currently, five national programmes of action are duly being implemented on the basis of recommendations of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In Uzbekistan, an Inter-ministerial Working Group, headed by the Minister of Justice, has been established to coordinate and monitor the implementation of national programmes of action.

4. On the basis of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, establishing national mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights in Uzbekistan

These include a Constitutional Court, an Institute for monitoring legislation in force, a parliamentary ombudsman and a National Centre for Human Rights and Non-governmental Organizations.

In addition, by decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the legal protection of human rights and freedoms, a Human Rights Office has been established under the Ministry of Justice with appropriate regional branches.

5. Liberalizing the judicial and legal systems

In Uzbekistan, concerted efforts are under way to reform the judicial system, with the aim of ensuring the independence of the judiciary as an essential guarantee of the effectiveness of human rights protection.

The Presidential Decrees "On the abolition of capital punishment in the Republic of Uzbekistan" and "On transferring to courts the right to issue sanctions for arrest" constituted a major step in advancing judicial and legal reform.

6. Providing human rights education

In application of General Assembly resolution 49/184 proclaiming the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, the Parliament of Uzbekistan adopted a National Programme for Enhancing Legal Culture.

A human rights monitoring mechanism has been established. To this end also, a National Programme of Action on Human Rights and a Human Rights Monitoring Initiative have been elaborated.

Under the programme, the Ministry of Justice permanently coordinates the activities of State bodies in the field of legal assistance and awareness-raising.

7. Establishing a non-governmental system for the protection of human rights

Since independence, the Parliament of Uzbekistan has enacted more than 10 laws on NGOs, which lay the legal foundations for the development of NGOs and enable the growth of civil society.

In Uzbekistan, a firm legislative basis has been established for NGO activities, as evidenced by their constant rise in number. Over the past 12 years, their numbers have grown by more than 250 per cent.

Currently, approximately 5,000 active NGOs are registered in the Republic.

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of Uzbekistan has been active since June 2005, focusing on providing comprehensive support to NGOs.

Under the auspices of this Association, a NGO Support Fund has been established to promote the development of civil society institutions.